

Int'l Women's Day tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The International Women's Day will be observed tomorrow throughout the country as elsewhere in the world.

The International Women's Day Observation Committee has chalked out an elaborate programme to celebrate the day this year, with the theme: "Equality of men and women's", says a press release.

The day commemorates a procession brought out on March 8, 1857 in New York by female workers to protest their working conditions and wages. The rally was attacked by the police.

Later, in 1910, the day was declared as the International Women's Day at the 2nd International Socialist Women's conference, held in Copenhagen, Denmark.

In the city, the programme begins today with a torch procession, scheduled to start at 5:30 pm from outside the National Museum, Shahbagh. It will end at the Dhanomdi playground with a cultural function.

Besides, rallies and discussion sessions will be held today at Boro Bazaar in Meherpur and at Kamarkhali Bazaar in Choromaddi, Bakerganj.

Tomorrow, a Women's Day procession will start at 8:30 am from the Bangla Motor in the city. It will end at the Ramna Botomul through a cultural function.

Another rally, organised by the Sammito Nari Shamaj, will start at 8:30 am from the Central Shaheed Minar. It will end in front of the National Museum, Shahbagh, through a cultural function.

Moreover, the Committee

will organise processions, rallies, discussion meetings and cultural functions tomorrow in Mymensingh, Sariakandi, Jessore, Tangail, Bogra, Jamalpur, Ghatail, Rajshahi, Netrakona, Cox's Bazaar, Sirajganj and Kurigram.

UNB adds: To mark the day, the Jatiyo Mahila Sangstha will bring out a procession from the National Museum at 2 pm tomorrow. It will be led by Begum Sarwari Rahman, State Minister for Women and Children's Affairs.

Later in the afternoon, the Women and Children Affairs Ministry will hold a discussion meeting at the Osmani Memorial at 4 pm.

DU admission tests postponed

By DU Correspondent

The Dhaka University authorities have postponed the admission tests for first year Honours classes for the session 1995-96. The tests were scheduled to start from March 15.

Meanwhile, admission forms will be distributed at least for a week after the political situation becomes normal. The authorities will accordingly note the date of distribution of forms.

Today is the scheduled closing date of distributing as well as receiving admission forms.

However, the admission forms will also be received tomorrow in the faculty offices for the convenience of the students.

One killed in city clash

By Staff Correspondent

One person was killed during a gunfight between two rival groups in the city yesterday.

An old man was also injured.

Asrar Ali, 35, a vendor, was killed on the spot when he was caught in cross fire during a gunfight between two rival groups of hooligans near Madhubagh playground in Moghbazar area at around 7:30 pm, police and witnesses said.

A 65-year-old man, identified as Abdul Zabbar, received bullet wounds during the hour long clash.

He has been admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The clash was a sequel to infighting of a local terrorist group.

Locals alleged that the group members were the supporters and activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatri Dal. They were allegedly involved in extortion and terrorism in the area for a long time.

Several rounds of gunshots were fired during the clash creating panic in the whole area.

Huge contingents of police were deployed in the area. Ramna police recovered the body and sent it to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.



Motijheel area in the city during hartal hours yesterday. — Star photo

3 Jubo Dal leaders shot in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Mar 6: Three

leaders of the Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, including its city convenor, received bullet wounds when some miscreants opened fire on them at Battal road of the town on Tuesday, reports UNB.

Syed Azam Uddin, city unit convenor and two other leaders — Shamsul Huq and Sujayet Hossain Khokon — came under attack at 1 pm; according to a party press release.

The attackers also hurled bombs and fled the scene, it added.

The injured were rushed to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

Meanwhile, Jubo Dal and JCD in a joint protest meeting, condemned the incident and blamed the BCL activists for the attack.

A case was filed with the Kotwali police.

Road barricade in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Mar 6: The traffic movement was stopped for eight hours at Tajpur on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway today for press for immediate installation of an automatic telephone exchange.

Several hundred vehicles got stranded on both sides of Tajpur Bazar due to the road blockade from 6:30 am to 2:00 pm. The Tajpur auto exchange implementation committee enforced the road blockade programme.

Gono Forum

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any such step.

The President could invite some leading personalities who enjoy confidence of all sections of people, as for example, one or more retired chief justices, to come forward and start consultations with all pro-democracy forces including political parties, civic and professional organisations and eminent personalities who took an active role in the pro-democracy movement," he elaborated.

"Through intensive consultations, they could spell out the concrete and specific steps to be taken to establish a neutral caretaker government and to hold a free and fair election within the shortest possible time," Dr Kamal added.

"They could also give the time-table and the ideas by which each step should be taken and the manner in which any legal or constitutional formalities can be completed. If necessary, they may recommend a reference to the Supreme Court for an advisory opinion under Article 106."

Dr Kamal observed that both the ruling party and the Opposition agreed separately on the need for free and fair elections and a caretaker government.

The Prime Minister's speech had cleared the BNP's position on an interim government, he noted. "He, however, added that since she did not mention any specific time-frame for setting up the interim government, uncertainty still persisted.

The rally was addressed, among others, by Nurjahan Murshid, Pankaj Bhattacharya, Jahurul Islam, Dr Abdul Hakim, Mostafa Mohsin Mantu and others.

Historic Mar 7

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abandhu Bhavan, AL Central Office and at all unit offices throughout the country at six in the morning.

AL leaders and workers will assemble at Bangabandhu Bhavan at 7:30 am to place wreaths at the portrait of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, says a party press release.

Besides, separate rallies will be organised in all 15 thanas in the city in the afternoon and the recorded speech of March 7 will be played.

80 injured in N'ganj clash

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Mar 6: At least 80 people were injured in a clash between the supporters of ruling BNP and opposition Awami League and Jatiya Party during a dawn-to-dusk hartal called by the main opposition parties today.

The city Awami League and the Jatiya Party in a joint statement claimed that at least 50 supporters of their parties were injured, nine of them seriously, during a clash with the supporters of BNP at Chashara.

The city BNP in a statement claimed that their 30 supporters were injured.

Witnesses said, the clash erupted at around 3:45 pm when opposition activists attacked BNP supporters who were going to the local bus stand in a procession to go to Dhaka for attending the Prime Minister's meeting.

Both the groups used cut rifles and pistols besides exploding more than 200 crude bombs during the half-an-hour clash.

The BNP alleged that three Juba Dal workers, including Kabir Hossain and Nurul Huda, were kidnapped by the Awami League and Jatiya Party activists and taken to Chashara, the stronghold of AL and JP.

In another incident at Fatulla, Habibur Rahman, a pedestrian, was seriously injured in a bomb explosion. He was admitted to Narayanganj Hospital.

Boulders

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turnable within four weeks, to the Assam government, the MMTC and others, said a report in the Business Standard yesterday.

As a result the blasting operation of the hill is being delayed although it was all set to undertake blasting operations in the hill, having obtained the necessary clearances from the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Ajam Pollution Control Board, the report said.

The MMTC had won a contract for supplying three lakh tonnes of boulders for 890 crore rupees World Bank-aided Jamuna Multi-Purpose Bridge Project in Sirajganj, Bangladesh.

Under the MMTC delivery schedule 30 thousand metric tonnes of boulders were to be made available per month alongside the designated leading points.

Khandaker Moshtaque laid to rest

Former president and National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Chairman Khandaker

Moshtaque Ahmed was buried at the family graveyard at Dashedpara under Daudkandi in Comilla yesterday, reports BSS.

Khandaker, Ishtiaq Ahmed Babu, son of the deceased, relations, friends and political personalities earlier attended his namaz-e-janaza at the local Nasim Maidan.

The qul khuaani of Moshtaque will be held at his Dashedpara residence after Asar prayers tomorrow.

100 injured, 18 held

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The late night announcement by the Opposition came as surprise to many office goers and school children turned up at their respective destinations only to know that hartal had been called for the day.

Traffic movement in the city and its adjoining areas was almost normal till around 10:00 am. Most of the vehicles were then taken off the roads as many Opposition activists started stopping vehicles, pelting stones and exploding crackers and home-made bombs.

Most of the schools, offices and shops that opened in the morning were soon closed as pro-hartal pickets became active. Police and BDR were deployed at various road intersections in the city. Their number seemed less than on other hartal days in the past.

Opposition activists set ablaze a minibus at Palashi in the morning while another one was damaged at Mirpur. Some autorickshaws were also damaged at Green Road, Mahakkhali and Baitul Mokarram areas. One of the autorickshaws damaged in the incident belonged to an English daily.

Witnesses said hartal supporters set afire a Bagra-bound bus in the city at about 11 am, leaving 10 passengers including a woman injured, news agency reports said. Some passengers alleged that their belongings were also looted during the incident.

Three trucks and a minibus were damaged near

Jahangirnagar University at around the same time. Five passengers of the minibus were reportedly injured in the incident.

At Farmgate, some home-made bombs exploded in a bus carrying BNP workers from Madanpur under Narayanganj district. It left at least 10 people injured including the driver. Five of them were sent to hospital sources, the fatally injured driver was shifted to some other hospital, our DMCH correspondent reported.

Police lobbed tear gas shells at Danik Bangla crossing in the afternoon when pro-hartal activists and BNP supporters exchanged brick-bats there. Chase and counter-chase between pro and anti hartal activists were also reported from some places in the city.

Witnesses said several buses and trucks carrying BNP workers to its rally at Manik Mia Avenue came under attack at different points in the city in the afternoon.

Train service was also disrupted due to the hartal, said Railway officials. Opposition activists set up barricades at Joydevpur, Fatullah and Tongi disrupting movement of trains from around 10:00 am to 6:00 pm.

At Joydevpur, activists hurled petrol bombs at the Railway station office. As a result some documents were burnt, said witnesses.

At Sreepur, pro-hartal activists, forcing an intercity express train to stop, clashed with the police. The clash left at least 25 people injured.

Seven killed in BDR firing

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situations, including Rangpur-5, were postponed because of violence.

Meanwhile, the opposition political parties called a 48-hour non-stop hartal in the constituencies from 6 am today (Thursday) to protest the killings.

Our Sirajganj Correspondent says three people were killed in BDR firing here yesterday.

Police and hospital sources confirmed two deaths, identifying the victims as Masud Rana, 25, and Nibot, 12, who were killed when BDR opened fire at the Bhuviyagati School centre.

The agitators attacked the office at about 3:30 pm and ransacked the furniture before setting it on fire. Firefighters from the district headquarters rushed to the spot to extinguish the fire.

According to the district election officials, repolling in 11 centres of Kishoreganj-1 (Hussainpur and Lakandul) and Kishoreganj-3 (Sadar) constituencies will be held today.

Comilla

Repolling in the Comilla-9 and Comilla-12 constituencies was held yesterday amid massive violence that left at least 30 people injured.

The turn out of voters was very thin as the opposition parties enticed a dawn-to-dusk hartal to foil the elections.

District election officials said polling in 27 centres out of 64 in Comilla-9 was again postponed yesterday due to massive violence.

Meanwhile, Md Shamsuddin, a ruling party candidate was elected from Comilla-12 constituency.

According to unofficial results, Shamsuddin bagged 43,551 votes while his nearest rival independent candidate Akbar Hossain Chowdhury polled 5144 votes. Results of Comilla-9 was not available till filing the report at 11 pm.

Witnesses said 30 people were injured in sporadic clashes between police and anti-election activists at Choudhagram Bazar. Of the injured, six were admitted to Choudhagram Health Complex.

snatched away ballot papers and boxes, police said.

At Belkuchi, some unidentified people also hurled bombs at the residence of Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO).

Opposition activists also attacked on Kazipur Primary School centre in Kamarkhanda (thana) and snatched ballot papers and boxes, according to police.

gunshots and several rounds of tear gas shells to disperse the rowdy opposition activists.

Traffic on Dhaka-Chittagong highway was disrupted for about four hours from 4 pm as the anti-election activists put up barricades on the highway at Cheura in the thana. They also damaged some 100 vehicles on the highway and different places in Choudhagram thana.

Repolling was held in 66 centres of Chandpur-6 and Chandpur-3 constituencies amidst violent opposition protests yesterday.

In Chandpur-3, repolling was held in 41 centres out of the total 51 and in 25 centres of Chandpur-6 constituency out of total 61 centres.

In Chandpur-3 constituency, there was reportedly no genuine voters in a couple of polling centres while at Matlab degree College there was no voting until in the afternoon as the Presiding Officer and Polling Officer left the centre in the face of demonstration by the opposition activists.

At Ghrid Maljidia centre at Faridganj (Chandpur-6) constituency, some 25 people were injured in clashes between the ruling BNP and opposition activists on Tuesday evening and yesterday.

Source said balloting could not be held in most of the centres in Chandpur-6 constituency because of opposition resistance.

Gaibandha

Our Gaibandha Correspondent adds: Opposition alliances today called for a two day hartal on Mar 7-8 to foil repolling of Gaibandha-2 and Gaibandha-3 constituencies scheduled to be held tomorrow.

Agitating processionists today ransacked Ekota Inter-city train at Gbandha station and a complete hartal was observed at Fulchhari and Shaghata, where repolling is scheduled in two constituencies — Gaibandha-4 and Gaibandha-5.

The anti-election activists brought out series of processions and held meetings to boycott polls.

The Midnight File

Houses of Indian parliament adjourn in uproar

NEW DELHI, Mar 6: Both houses of India's parliament adjourned in uproar today after deputies demanded the resignation of Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao over a political corruption scandal. The furore came as another opposition leader was charged in the bribes-for-favours scandal and two former ministers facing charges won bail in the case, reports Reuter.

Contents of PM's Letter

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Commenting on Begum Zia's letter, Mannan Bhuiyan said that his party was awaiting a reply from Sheikh Hasina and that he would initiate the next step for discussions after receiving the reply.

Asked on the Opposition's proposal that the President should initiate the proposed dialogue, Mannan Bhuiyan said, "We want direct talks with them, to resolve the political crisis."

The BNP leader regretted the "attacks" on his party workers by the "Opposition activists" yesterday. "We shifted our public rally twice to avoid confrontation with the opposition parties, which repeatedly shifted the date of their hartal coinciding it with our rally," he said.

He, however, said that the BNP workers in the city joined the rally braving all "threats and attacks by the Opposition activists."

On the Oppositions planned

indefinite non-cooperation programme, Mannan Bhuiyan said. "Agitation that allows taking law into their own hands can not bag public support. Because, people want peace."

Text of PM's letter

Following is The Daily Star translated version of Begum Zia's letter to Sheikh Hasina: "In my address to the nation on March 3, I made specific proposals so that all future general elections can take place under a non-party government and so that all political parties can participate in those elections.

"Making those proposals as agenda, I call you to sit for a dialogue immediately to reach a solution, acceptable to all concerned, on the outline of the non-party government, the next general elections and other relevant issues.

"Please, let us know your views, in the shortest possible time when and where we can sit for discussions.

"I hope that, Insha Allah, the existing problems would be resolved through our discussions and our united efforts."

Both the student groups called for a day-long strike in Rajshahi University tomorrow.

separate press conferences blamed the Shibir for the attacks and demanded immediate arrest of the attackers.

Chhatra Oikya leader Ali Hasan told newsmen that seven armed Shibir activists including Shahadat, Masud, Helal and Mukul killed Aman and attacked Chhatra Maitree and BCL leaders.

Both the student groups called for a day-long strike in Rajshahi University tomorrow.

wide spread violence and snatching of ballot papers and boxes.

Begum Zia bagged total 47,655 votes, including 2,128 from 25 centres in the day's repolling. Voting has been postponed in one centre due to violence during repolling today.

The repolling in the constituencies (Sadar and Daganbhuiyan thana) was conducted peacefully amid tight security. Huge contingent of BDR and police was deployed at the polling centres.

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Readymade garments

From Page 1

completely idle despite having (export) orders.

"My factory was supposed to get fabrics worth 1.5 million dollars by 18th of this month. But the shipment has been stuck at the Chittagong port," said Iqbal Ahmed, owner of several RMG units.

"If the strike begins, the garments sector would collapse taking with it the banks, insurance companies, accessories makers, and the transport sector," said Engineer M A Taher, former vice-president of BGMEA. "The livelihood of about 20 million people is related directly or indirectly to the garments sector. They will plunge into a deep pocket of poverty."

Manufacturers can not ship their consignments because of the strikes and the consequent congestions at the port resulting in increasing stocklots of apparels.

"If we have stocklots of orders because of export failures, we have to sell them at half the original price," said Taher. "Those of us having fabric, awaiting at the port are likely to face the same fate."

Iqbal Ahmed, Managing Director of Burlingtons Ltd, said manufacturers can not provide any production schedule because of the political uncertainty, resulting in a total loss of buyers' confidence.

The buyers who had placed orders with us would not understand the strikes or congestions. Whatever the order are pre-sold apparels and therefore, they want them to be delivered in time. They are insisting on us to air-freight the products," said M R Ali, chairman of Shippers Council of Bangladesh and owner of several RMG factories.

"If we miss one ship, this makes timely delivery of garments uncertain," said Ali. "We do not know when we can avail the next ship."

"The buyers were sympathetic to us when cyclone ravaged the country in 1991 and we failed to deliver apparels in time. But they are not in a position to accept the current man-made catastrophe. They are not willing to extend shipment time," he added.

Orders are being diverted to other emerging garments exporting countries. Manufacturers reported that the international buyers are placing fewer orders this year. For example, Capital Mercury Shirt Corp Ltd, a major US buyer, has slashed its orders from about five lakh dozen the previous year to only 80,000 dozen. It is reportedly buying from Kenya.

The garment factories were supposed to work for the autumn and winter styles now, but most factories remain idle as buyers are not placing orders because of the political turmoil.

The manufacturers have already missed the summer orders for the summer styles because of the political crisis, now they are poised for the autumn and winter season again.

Many garment factory owners are facing bankruptcy as their bank loans are increasing while they also have to pay wages to the regular workers.

Even the banks are refusing to continue funding the factories as they are crossing their credit limits.

"I am facing a Tk 1.5 crore deficit after the last three months' of backlog in expenses," said one garment

factory owner. "I opened LCs four months back, but could not deliver the goods in time. Meanwhile, my local bank has debited the LC money from my account and paid to the beneficiary bank in Hong Kong. I have to bear the interest on this payment although I have not received the export proceeds."

Manufacturers now fear that the factories will face liquidity crisis very shortly, which some of them are already facing, as the banks will not be willing to provide credit due to non-performance of commitment by the manufacturers.

The ships facing congestions at the Ctg port are unloading their consignments at the Singapore port, according to the Shippers' Council of Bangladesh.

"One day's delay at the port causes about 6,000 dollars demurrage to the shipping lines. This is why they are diverting to Singapore, which puts the importers even at great odds," a Shippers' Council official said.

Ships are now unwilling to carry cargo to Bangladesh because of the congestion and uncertainty, Shippers' Council sources said.

Captain Anisur Rahman Sinha (rtd), Chairman of Opep Group, said he received a message from Hong Kong that all shipping lines excepting Matsui are refusing to ferry cargo to Bangladesh.

At least 25 per cent of the country's estimated 2,250 garments units are now closed, according to a BGMEA estimate. A large number of garment factories are also limping towards closure because of shortage of fabrics.

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